

WARD NEWS

Ward 4 - Councilmember Stark

www.stpaul.gov/ward4

651.266.8640



Saint Paul City Councils Ward 4 E-Newsletter Volume 10, January 2009

Reflections at the end of year one in office

The year started with an interesting debate about Trader Joes in Ward 3, and ended with approving a budget for 2009 and then being unallotted \$5.7 million by the state. The budget will be the focus of attention in early 2009, and it will have to be managed very closely by the Council and the Coleman Administration, as significant additional cuts are expected in Local Government Aid.

Throughout the year, there were some high points:

An extremely positive, encouraging outcome to the Rock-Tenn Community Advisory Panel process. Many thanks to the members of the Rock-Tenn Community Advisory Panel, a majority of whom were Ward 4 residents, as well as to the St. Paul Port Authority, Rock-Tenn Company, the United Steelworkers and the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly, the members of Neighbors Against the Burner, and the many other stakeholders who participated.

Led by a strong, organized community, we achieved recognition by Ramsey County and the Metropolitan Council that the light rail project needs to include stations at Hamline, Victoria, and Western.

I was proud to play a role in the City taking a stronger stand with lenders and property owners regarding their responsibilities to maintain vacant and foreclosed homes.

The adoption of the Central Corridor Development Strategy and of the Central Corridor Overlay zoning district that will prevent the further proliferation of auto-oriented development on the avenue and encourage more compact, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development.

A pedestrian safety campaign on Snelling Avenue in Hamline-Midway and a campaign to remind property owners of their responsibility to shovel their sidewalks, both of which will serve as starting points for other campaigns and increased awareness of the needs and safety of pedestrians.

A new, balanced ordinance dealing with sober housing that embraces sober houses as a needed, therapeutic option while limiting spill-over impacts on neighbors. Thanks in this case are in order to the Union Park Sober House Task force members - neighbors who were tireless partners in developing the ordinance.

The creation of a new Task Force to guide the process of developing a new Como Pool.

And some disappointments:

Significant, as yet unresolved work to mitigate the greater-than-expected loss of on-street parking that will be caused by the light rail project on University Avenue.

A largely negative community dialogue about a possible supportive housing use at the Sholom Home site at Snelling and Midway Parkway. The silver lining is a new Task Force of District 10 that is meeting to pro-actively seek positive re-uses of the Sholom Home site.

WARD NEWS

Ward 4 - Councilmember Stark

www.stpaul.gov/ward4

651.266.8640



A disconnect between expectations and outcomes surrounding law enforcement and business activity during the Republican National Convention.

An increasing number of foreclosed and vacant homes in the Ward, particularly in the eastern part of Hamline-Midway.

Some of my projects in 2009 include:

Working with community partners to address the growing number of vacant and foreclosed homes in Ward 4. Part of this work will include improving energy efficiency in these homes to reduce our carbon footprint and improve long-term affordability considering rising energy costs.

Working to shepherd through a new Complete Streets Policy, that will ensure that all new and reconstructed streets in the City accommodate the needs of all users, including pedestrians, motorists, cyclists, emergency vehicles (and in some cases) transit vehicles, trucks, etc.

Countering an anticipated effort to translate the budget crisis into the closure of one or more Ward 4 libraries.

Continuing to advocate for the best possible outcomes with regard to the construction of the Central Corridor light rail project, including a strategy for mitigating the loss of on-street parking and construction, and identifying new and existing funding sources to ensure a high quality streetscape and opportunities for new development that will serve and benefit residents of St. Paul.

Working to enact an ordinance requiring that all new developments meet a higher standard for green design, particularly with regard to energy efficiency.

As always, I welcome your feedback and ideas, and as we move into a year of difficult budget choices, I particularly welcome your ideas on ways for the City to save money without reducing basic services.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russ Stark".

Russ Stark

Be in the Know:

- Opportunities to testify on the City of Saint Pauls Comprehensive Plan Updates
A Comprehensive Plan is required by Minnesota state law and must be approved by the Metropolitan Council. The Comprehensive Plan provides long-term policy guidance on Saint Pauls development and must be updated every 10 years. In the coming weeks, the City Council will hold public hearings on the draft chapters. Please use this opportunity to offer feedback on our long-term plans.

The chapters can be found here: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.asp?nid=355>

Public Hearings are held at 5:30pm. The Introduction/Implementation, Transportation, and Water chapters will have their public hearings on February 4. Housing, Historic Preservation, and Land Use public hearings will be held on February 18.

WARD NEWS

Ward 4 - Councilmember Stark

www.stpaul.gov/ward4

651.266.8640

- Budget and Property Tax Resources, including a new video: <http://mn-stpaul.civicplus.com/index.asp?NID=2756>
- The State of MN Complete Streets Study Website:
<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/index.html>
- Como Pool Replacement Process and Task Force: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.asp?NID=2886>
- District 10 Environment Committee Forum on energy savings for home owners
February 5, 7:00pm at the Capitol Region Watershed District office at 1410
Energy Park Dr (<http://www.comopark.org/modules/news/>)
- Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs offered for as little as \$1 apiece by Xcel - save money on the bulb, and up to \$50 in energy costs over the life of each bulb: <http://www.responsiblebynature.com/brightidea>

Please pass on the Ward 4 e-news to neighbors and friends. Subscribe by emailing
Samantha.Henningson@ci.stpaul.mn.us.